



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

LIONEL OF ORKNEY—A ONE-ACT PLAY.

JENNIE HALL,

FRANCIS W. PARKER SCHOOL, CHICAGO, ILL.

THE following play was written by an eighth grade at the close of nine months' work in literature. During the preceding year this class had made a study of chivalry and of other mediæval institutions. For its eighth-grade work such literature was chosen as would complete and beautify the imagery resulting from that historical study. We read in class Tennyson's "Coming of Arthur," "Gareth and Lynette," "Sir Galahad," and "The Lady of Shalott." The teacher read to the pupils Malory's version of "Launcelot and Elaine," and of the Gareth story. At the same time each student was reading at home two or three books of the Arthur stories retold for children—Frost's *Knights of the Round Table*, Radford's *King Arthur and His Knights*, Pyle's *Story of King Arthur*, Bulfinch's *Age of Chivalry*. As a result of reading these different authors there arose the question of the sources and treatment of the stories. The study necessary in answering this question created among the class a new feeling of imaginative freedom in story-telling, and an appreciation of the artistic qualities of a tale and of the possibilities of the craft.

As a direct preparation for the writing of this play we spent two months in training ourselves in literary composition. After the pupils felt some confidence in their power to write a readable thing, we set to work directly upon the play. Different members of the class submitted the skeletons of plots either original, or transcribed from stories read, or partly original and partly suggested by reading. We worked these plots over in class, and finally compounded into one some ideas of Tennyson's, of Malory's, and of our own. Malory's quaint English had caught the pupils' fancy, and they decided to try to imitate it. This entailed a more careful reading of parts of *La Morte D'Arthur*, with attention focused upon the diction.

The class made a distinct effort to have this play simple. We spent some time discussing means to this end. Plays are frequent in our school, and as a consequence the pupils had sufficient experience to make the discussion valuable. They decided to have no change of costume or of scenery. They had just seen a French drama in one act. This plan was the solution of their problem of simple staging, but it added to the difficulty of the composition of the play. The whole plot had to be reconstructed to occur in one place and at one time. This simplicity of plan is to one the best point in the drama. It very much pleased its authors, also, at the final working-out.

The play is a class composite. Sometimes parts were written at home, read in class, accepted, rejected, combined, changed, to please the social opinion. Sometimes the composing was done at first-hand and red-hot during the recitation—a bit from one person, an addition by another, a change by a third, a general expression of acceptance. The prologue was written in two parts by two pupils. It will be found to savor strongly of the prologue to *Henry V.*, which captured the imagination of one of the boys.

The story was acted on a stage bare of scenery, with only a rough table and a few old-fashioned cooking utensils for properties. The costumes were simple. They were used, not with the idea of correctly presenting a time so vague and so inaccurately known, but with the purpose of making the stage picture beautiful and sufficiently unusual to cause the auditors vividly to realize that we were representing an olden time.

The play is presented here because it is thought that any suggestion toward simplifying and pruning school plays will be of some use.

PROLOGUE.

If this poor stage were but a kingdom with kings and knights to act, then could with all his glory, Arthur, the mighty king, come forth and do deeds of knightliness. But here one person must take the place of hundreds. Suppose within this stage is Arthur's mighty kitchen, with fires blazing and spits of meat sputtering gaily, with hundreds of kitchen knaves at work preparing the great feast of Pentecost. Table after table stands surrounded with knaves rolling, kneading, and slicing food for the feast.

Outside this royal kitchen is Arthur's castle, the center being his hall,

around which stand the keep and other buildings. Surrounding these is the castle wall, with huge towers which seem to loom up to the very sky. Inside the great hall throng the knights in shining, long-skirted armor of chain; the ladies in splendid gowns; and the many subjects, seeking justice and receiving it from their noble king.

He is seated on his throne of golden dragons, garbed in a robe of red samite brodered with golden dragons, and the dragon crown is on his head. But here, with all this glory and this splendor, the most glorious of all is Arthur's noble manner, and his kindly face that seems to look down upon his people and bless them, as the sun blesses all on which it shines. Here, truly, is the glory of the land—a king who wishes his knights to reverence and honor their sovereign, to live a pure life, to speak the truth alway, to right the wrong that comes within their paths, and to do ladies, damsels and gentlewomen help whenever it is needed. And so strong is Arthur's influence that all the knights of the Table Round strive to gratify their noble king's desires that they may be well worthy of knighthood.

LIONEL OF ORKNEY.

[*Scene: Arthur's kitchen. Lionel telling story. Servants listening.*]

LIONEL. And forward rode a knight, all clad in rusty armor, and threw down his glove at the Sparrow-hawk's feet, saying: "Thou shalt repent thy insolence to Queen Guinevere." To this the Sparrow-hawk replied: "Thou art the one that shalt repent." Thereupon they withdrew to their stations and dressed their spears. Then with a mighty shout — (*Kay enters; stamps his feet.*)

KAY. Idle knaves! Get ye to work! You do naught but talk. (*Servants scatter.*) And you, Sir Fair-hands, is it not enough for you to lumber the kitchen without keeping the others from their work with your silly tales? (*Enter Geraint.*)

KAY (*turning to Geraint*). By my troth, Sir Geraint, I came unto the kitchen and found this young knave telling one of his fairy-stories. What think ye of it?

GERAINT. Be thou not too hard on them. Is not the work done?

KAY. I do believe it is.

GERAINT. Shall these poor knaves, then, have no leisure? Speak gently to them. A kind master makes a willing servant. (*Exit Lionel.*) See how he carries himself. I think, Sir Kay, this Lionel is of noble birth. He tells the tales rightly and he knows all the events of chivalry.

KAY. Bah! The listening knave hath merely caught the manner of his betters.

GERAINT. Time will prove. (*Exeunt Kay and Geraint. Enter Lionel carrying stick as a lance. Servants laugh.*)

FIRST SERVANT. Behold! Sir Lionel of the crooked stick!

SECOND SERVANT. Doth any weak-heart here dare to meet yon noble knight? If so, let him stand forth.

THIRD SERVANT. I, the conqueror of Arthur's kitchen, do here, in way of challenge, throw my gauntlet at your feet. (*Throws dish cloth.*)

LIONEL. Do you so hunger to bite the dust? Prepare, false knight! (*They rush together and wrestle. Lionel wins.*) Behold the conqueror of Arthur's kitchen laid low. Who next will — (*Clash of arms outside. Servants rush out. Noise of conflict. Shouts.*)

KAY (*outside*). Niccon! Lionel! Safir! (*Appearing in door.*) Lionel's doing! (*Servants enter shouting, with Lionel on their shoulders.*)

SERVANTS. Lionel, defender of the helpless! Victor of the courtyard! Sir Lionel of the baking table!

KAY. Fools! What mockery is this?

FIRST SERVANT. Go ask yon knight who lieth in the courtyard.

SERVANTS. Most noble Lionel!

KAY. Niccon, get you to the forester. Bring me back the peacocks for tomorrow's feast. Lionel, to the peat-bogs! (*Niccon and Lionel exeunt.*) (*Kay. Turning to others.*) Now, tell me with goodly haste the cause of all this stir.

SECOND SERVANT. Two knights were at a bout in the courtyard.

THIRD SERVANT. And one was unhorsed and lay on the ground in a swoon. (*Geraint enters and stands in door listening.*)

FOURTH SERVANT. The coward Modred heeded not his helpless plight, but rushed upon him with lowered lance.

FIFTH SERVANT. When forward Lionel sprang. He seized the bridle and with mighty force sent the horse back upon his haunches.

SIXTH SERVANT. And Modred rolled in the dust.

GERAINT. What! Is Modred down? Methinks the lad hath done right well. It is a sore shame that a knight of the Table Round should so demean himself. There speaks the lad's noble blood, meseems, Sir Kay.

KAY. Mayhap, but I doubt it. (*Enter Niccon and bows to Kay.*) What wouldst thou?

NICCON. I come from King Arthur. He would see Sir Geraint and Sir Kay in his chamber. (*Exeunt Kay and Geraint.*)

FOURTH SERVANT. Geraint is sore loving unto this Lionel.

FIFTH SERVANT. Yea! Is he better than we are that he should be thus over-praised?

SIXTH SERVANT. Natheless he is wonderly strong.

THIRD SERVANT. Ay, but he knows it..

FOURTH SERVANT. Yea, truly! How doth he strut up and down like a peacock with its tail spread!

FIFTH SERVANT. How like a beggar he looked a few months back when first he came to Arthur's court! (*Enter Lionel.*)

LIONEL. Cowards! Stint your noise! What say ye of beggars behind

my back? For wit ye well I am no beggar. I am a king's son. (*Servants laugh.*)

SECOND SERVANT. List how he plays the overlord!

THIRD SERVANT. A king's son! Marry, but he looks it.

FOURTH SERVANT. Methinks your father ne'er saw a knight.

FIFTH SERVANT. I will tell you this Lionel's cognizance. It is a frying pan with a dish clout rampant.

LIONEL (*striking the speaker*). Dog! So be to all insulters of King Bors of Orkney!

SIXTH SERVANT. How comest thou here, then? Thy fame is naught more than mockery. Yea, it seemeth me that my father is Leogrant, king of Northumberland. (*Enter Lady Blanche.*)

LADY. I seek Sir Launcelot. Pray, is he here?

SECOND SERVANT. Nay, but here is Sir Lionel, knight of the crooked stick. Will he not serve?

LADY. Knaves, be quiet! Tell me where the noble Sir Launcelot abideth, if ye wot it. But who is this Lionel of the crooked stick?

THIRD SERVANT. A noble knave of scullion blood. (*Enter wounded knight.*)

KNIGHT. What seekest thou here, fair lady? The kitchen is all too rough a place for thee. If it were not for this young Lionel that hath saved my life, I would not myself be here.

LADY. I seek the most pure knight in all the world. Only such an one can serve me. Yonder in her castle bideth my fair sister, imprisoned by three wicked knights, who guard the castle-gates. Before she can be free, these robbers must be slain by this sword. It was girt to my waist by the charm of a wicked enchanter and cannot be drawn save by a stainless knight. Many years have I traveled on this quest. From Charlemagne's dominions to the land of the Holy Sepulcher have I wandered. Many a knight hath assayed, and one and all have failed. Much mockery have I sustained. I pray you, Sir knight, make trial.

KNIGHT. Ay, that I will. But if I succeed not, will ye let yon kitchen knave try his skill? For wit ye well he deserved it. He served me right nobly this day, when I was unhorsed.

LADY. It is passing strange to see a knight set store by a kitchen knave. Yet did I hear that I should see wonders in Arthur's court.

LIONEL. Ay, noble lady! But not in the kitchen bide the wonders. Saw ye not King Arthur throned and crowned? There standeth the great glory of our land.

LADY. Soothly have I seen him, and my heart shook at the sight. Verily I thought I looked into heaven and beheld Sir Michael or Sir Gabriel or other archangel. But I marvel to hear such knightly words upon the lips of a scullion.

KNIGHT. It all betokeneth some mystery about this Lionel, I wist. He hath the marks of knightly blood, meseems.

LIONEL. Oh, the lady with whom I dwelt erstwhile hath been kind to me. I companioned with her sons.

LADY. Ay? Lieth knightliness, then, in the friends a man keepeth and not in the blood? (*Turning to wounded knight.*) But now, Sir knight, make thine assay. (*Knight tries to draw sword and fails.*)

KNIGHT. I am not the knight for thine adventure, and sore it shameth me.

LADY. Nay, be not so heavy. All the knights of the Round Table have made trial but now, and no one hath stirred it a whit.

LIONEL. What? King Arthur? Hath he tried?

LADY. Ay.

LIONEL. And Sir Percivale?

LADY. Ay.

LIONEL. Then art thou doomed to wear it all thy life, I fear me.

KNIGHT. Yet do thou try. It is the day of Pentecost, the day of miracles.

THIRD SERVANT. Beware! His greasy hands will soil the hilt.

LIONEL. I wot well I am not worthy, but I fain would try. Sure no harm can come of it.

LADY. Yea, set thy hand to the hilt, good youth! (*Lionel draws sword as King Arthur enters.*)

LADY. I am free! Behold, Sir King! I have found my knight.

ARTHUR. Most noble Lionel, this day hast thou proved thyself worthy of knighthood. And thy rank, too, well deserveth it; for hither hath come but now a messenger from thy lady mother, Queen Bellicent of Orkney. She hath told me of her sore heart and of thy disguise. Little wote she that the love of knightliness was so strong in thee that thou wouldst stoop thy head beneath the kitchen roof to become a knight.

LADY. Art thou the son of Queen Bellicent of Orkney? Then must thou be of noble blood. What meanest thou by that tale of the kind mistress and her sons that thou hast told us of?

LIONEL. Now let me prove you that this tale is true. The mistress is my mother, and her sons my brothers. I vowed unto my mother ere I came here to keep my name a secret for a twelvemonth and a day.

LADY. And thou didst guard a favor as thou didst guard thy vow, it would honor any noble maid to put one in thy keeping.

LIONEL. I have not yet a casque wherein to set it; yet if of thy grace thou wouldst grant me thy favor, mayhap I might sometime win to a helm.

LADY. Here, then, Sir Lionel! Guard it well. And here do I gird thee with this sword that thou didst free me from.

LIONEL. Fair lady, I am not yet a knight, though I fain would be. Yet this I will vow, that as soon as I become a knight I will undertake thine adventure.

ARTHUR. As for that, it is in my heart speedily to amend thy case.

Kneel down and lay thy hands in mine, and swear to reverence the king, as if he were thy conscience, and thy conscience as thy king; to break the heathen and uphold the Christ; to ride abroad redressing human wrongs; to speak no slander, no, nor listen to it; to honor thy own word as if thy God's; to lead sweet life in purest chastity; to love one maiden only, cleave to her, and worship her by years of noble deeds; to love the truth and all that makes a man.

LIONEL (*drawing his sword*). On this holy rood I swear to take upon me and to keep all these vows of chivalry.

ARTHUR (*giving him the accolade*). In the name of God, of St. George, and St. Michael, I dub thee knight. Arise, Sir Knight!

[*Curtain.*]